REMARKS

The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration in view of the arguments set forth fully below. Claims 1-44 were previously pending in this application. Within the Office Action, claims 1-44 have been rejected. By the above amendments, claims 1, 12, 23, and 35 have been amended. Accordingly, claims 1-44 are currently pending in this application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Within the Office Action, claims 1-44 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,253,188 issued to Witek et al. (hereafter "Witek"). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Witek teaches a system and method for providing classified ads over the Internet. Internet users can connect to a Newspaper web server and central Web application server to search for and obtain classified ads. Ad records are stored in ad database servers 20 for providing classified ad records on request to application servers 16. To search the ad records, the search process is divided into two principle parts. The first part includes a system entry and pre-selection sequence, and the second part includes a record selection sequence (Witek, col. 12, lines 10-13). More specifically, in the first part the user enters the system and specifies the category of classified ads to be searched. Thereafter, as the user navigates to the respective selected category, the user further specifies a subcategory for the particular category selected (Witek, col. 12, lines 27-37). The selected category and subcategory pair is identified by a category/subcategory ID 46. The second part of the search process includes entering a formal record selection query containing the specific parameters for the ad records the user wishes to see. The specific parameters are entered as primary selection parameters 60 and as secondary selection parameters 62. In summary, the first part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on category, or in other words a hierarchical search (Witek, col. 13, lines 30-46). This category search is applied to a two-level hierarchical data structure The second part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on entered parameters, in other words keyword search or parametric search. The search performed as part of the second part is applied to a subgroup of ad records associated with the previously selected category/subcategory combination of the first part. Witek teaches that the parametric search is only applied to the subgroup of ad records. Witek does not teach that the parametric search can be applied to the

first two levels of the hierarchical data structure, that is the searching process performed in the category search of the first part. Specifically, Witek does not teach performing a parametric search from any node within the hierarchical data structure.

By the above amendments, the independent claims are amended to clarify that the parametric search can be performed from any node within the directory tree structure. Witek does not teach such a limitation.

Further, within the Office Action, it is stated that Witek teaches that each specific node (within a directory tree structure) provides a corresponding set of parameters. However, Witek specifically teaches in column 50, lines 39-45 (and also Figure 15) that certain category/subcategory combinations do not allow for searching with selection parameters, and as such, an ad record associated with this category/subcategory is deemed not searchable. In this case, the ad record is designated with only its category and subcategory designation codes, and the full text of the ad. No selection parameters are associated with this ad record. As such, Witek teaches that certain category/subcategory combinations, or nodes, do not provide a corresponding set of parameters. In contrast, each of the independent claims of the present application include the limitation that each node in a directory tree structure provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data is defined.

Amended independent claim 1 is directed to a method of accessing information within a directory tree structure. The method of claim 1 comprises the steps of formatting a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter, accessing a particular node within the directory tree structure, setting one or more search parameters corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node, and performing a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search parameters to the set parameters for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items. As discussed above, Witek does not teach performing a parametric search from any node within a directory tree structure. Further, Witek does not teach that each node within the directory tree structure provides a corresponding set of parameters. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 2-11 depend on the independent claim 1. As described above, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 2-11 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Amended independent claim 12 is directed to a research system for accessing information within a directory tree structure. The research system of claim 12 comprises means for formatting a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter, means for accessing a particular node within the directory tree structure, means for setting one or more search parameters corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node, and means for performing a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search parameters to the set parameters for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items. As discussed above, Witek does not teach performing a parametric search from any node within a directory tree structure. Further, Witek does not teach that each node within the directory tree structure provides a corresponding set of parameters. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 12 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 13-22 depend on the independent claim 12. As described above, the independent claim 12 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 13-22 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Amended independent claim 23 is directed to a research system for accessing information within a directory tree structure. The research system of claim 23 comprises a research server configured to format a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter, to access a particular node within the directory tree structure, to set one or more search parameters corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node, and to perform a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search

parameters to the set parameters for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items. As discussed above, Witek does not teach performing a parametric search from any node within a directory tree structure. Further, Witek does not teach that each node within the directory tree structure provides a corresponding set of parameters. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 23 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 24-34 depend on the independent claim 23. As described above, the independent claim 23 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 24-34 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Amended independent claim 35 is directed to a network of devices for accessing information within a directory tree structure. The network of devices of claim 35 comprises one or more computer systems configured to establish a connection with other systems, and a a research server coupled to the one or more computer systems to format a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter, to access a particular node within the directory tree structure, to set one or more search parameters corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node, and to perform a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search parameters to the set parameters for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items. As discussed above, Witek does not teach performing a parametric search from any node within a directory tree structure. Further, Witek does not teach that each node within the directory tree structure provides a corresponding set of parameters. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 35 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 36-44 depend on the independent claim 35. As described above, the independent claim 35 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 36-44 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

For the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-44 are now in a condition for allowance, and allowance at an early date would be appreciated. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, he/she is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 530-9700.

Respectfully submitted,
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING (37 CFR§ 1.8(a))

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